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CAUCASIAN CARPET "SHIRVAN" **ORIGIN OF DESIGN AND HISTORY OF TRANSFORMATION** **"ROMAN STARS" IN "LEZGHI STAR"**

The widely known Shirvan carpet with a cross shaped of eight-pointed star, generally recognized as Caucasian. This opinion is based on numerous carpets dating from the 19th - early 20th centuries. Earlier carpets of this design belonging to the Safavid era were not found. But there are their images in the paintings of the Italian Renaissance, the Netherlands painting of the 17th century, as well as the oriental painting of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

In English sources of the mid-20th century, these carpets are classified as "Caucasian Shirvan" (Ulrich Shurmann). In the Russian-language sources of this time, there is a clarification of "Shirvan-Kuba". From the middle of the 20th century, local studies and classification appear, in which the names of the villages in which they traditionally woven are specified. As a result of this clarification, the names "Jamjamli" (the name of the village of Shirvan. Maraza District) and "Zeyva" (the name of the village of Shabran District. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the village was part of the Kuba County)

Before joining Russia, the Jamjamli and Zeyva villages was located in the historic territory of Shirvan. At the beginning of the 19th century both villages: "Jamjamli" and

“Zeyva” became part of the Shirvan province of the Russian Empire. Then this province was renamed to Shemakha and later - to Baku Province.

The name of the village “Zeyva” comes from the arabic word “zaviyya” (Sufi monastery). The remains of the Sufi monastery in the village were destroyed by the Bolsheviks during the Soviet era, but remained in the name of the village.

In the village of “Jamjamly”, an underground Sufi monastery “Khalvat” also functioned (the place of prayers for the Sufi sect “Halvatiya” (concealers), which by chance has survived to the present day.

In both villages, historically weaving carpets with the same design and the so-called motif “Lezghi Star”.



Many names of the same carpet...

The widespread carpets of these villages and their main motive are known by several names: “Caucasus”, “Shirvan,“ Kuba ”,“ Shirvan Star ”,“ Star Kazak ”,“ Caucasus Star ”,“ Shirvan Lezghi Star ”,“ Lezghi Star ”, “Lezghi design”, “Seljuk Star” and others. The same carpet has many geographical names: “Caucasian ”,“ Anatolian ”,“ Dagestanian ”,“ Moroccan ”,“ Persian ”. There are also replicas of this carpet: “Yagchi Bedir rug” (Turkiye), “Sultanabad rug” (Persia) and others.



The basic design...

The design of the carpet has a carefully designed structure. The main motif in the form of a cruciform octagonal star, consistently and mirrored in the central field. On the four sides of the star, arrow-shaped elements that form the square background of the star base diverge. The number of stars varies depending on the size of the stars. The basic design principle is the “docking” of the angles of the stars to the subsequent star along the vertical or horizontal axis. In fact, we are seeing a mosaic design principle based on a mesh geometric design.

The mesh design of the design of Oriental carpets has an ancient name that has come down to our days - “Bandy-Rumi” (Roman mesh, bundle, compound). The basis of this design is vertical, horizontal or diagonal repetition of the motive in a strict sequence of geometric design. This ancient geometrical-mathematical principle was brilliantly implemented in the 20th century in the work of the Dutch graphic artist Maurits Cornelis Escher. The mesh design of the design is formed by two or three complementary and interconnected with each other complex geometric shapes. The principle of development of such a design is “tiled” buildup of the components of the motive.

The same principle underlies carpet weaving. Here the nodes play the role of micro-modules of the motive (geometric shape). “Tiled distribution of a micro-module (knot pitch) along a grid of warp and weft threads leads to the completion of the motive and its conjugation with neighboring motifs. Most clearly, this principle is visible in flat woven carpets. The basic design of the Caucasian carpet design “Shirvan is based on this principle.



The prevalence of design ...

The geographical distribution of carpet design is extensive: Spain, Morocco, Anatolia, Iran, Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan and even Pakistan (Banjara embroideries). The geographic factor, in one way or another, influences the ethnic definition. Therefore, with equal success, this design can be called Spanish, Moroccan, Turkic, Afshar, Kashkai, Shahseven, Tat, Lezgin, Farsi, Turkmen, etc. All these ethnic groups today can claim the authorship of the design and the main motive of the carpet.



Design Genesis ...

The so-called Lezghi Star design originates in the ancient Greek culture of "geometric style. Emerged in the era of the Archaic (900-700 BC), the "geometric style" is distributed in the Mosaic floors and the vase painting of ancient Greece. Monuments Isthmia, Pella (Greece), Paphos, Naxos (Cyprus), Efesus, Zeugma, Gordion (Turkey) and many others, keep the earliest examples of this design in mosaic decorations of ancient temples and villas.

The direct heir of the ancient Greek civilization was the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium). Here we again meet the same principles of design and motif familiar to us from the Caucasian carpet. The decor of the mosaic floors of rich Roman villas with geometric patterns continued the traditions established by the ancient Greek culture.

Cultural and historical contacts of the Muslim civilization with the Roman heritage in the territory of the former Eastern Roman Empire - lead to the development and processing of this heritage in the architectural decor of Muslim palace interiors and decorative art objects (including - textiles and carpets).

The direct continuation of the Greco-Roman geometric style in the tissues of the Western part of the Caliphate (Maghreb), Al-Andalus (Cordoba. Spain) and the Sultanate of Rum, was the starting point of the medieval migration of this design to the eastern carpets.

The area of direct contact between the early Islamic civilization and the Roman heritage was the Muslim al-Maghrib (literally "where sunset is." West), stretching to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain). Cordoban emirate and al-Andalus were the focus where the synthesis of ancient Roman, Christian and Islamic principles of decorative art took place. A special synthetic style "Mudejar" is formed here, in which Roman, Islamic and Gothic traditions are closely intertwined.

From architecture and its mosaic decors, the design was originally "transferred" to fabric. Geometric style flourishes in the decoration of fabrics, which later will be called "Nasirid style". The further development of this Islamized style in Spain was stopped by the Reconquista movement.

But the facts show that this design and its motives have not been lost. They continued their existence in the fabrics and carpets of Mamluks Egypt.



Mamluk period in the development of design ...

In the 13th and 15th centuries, Egyptian Cairo became the scene of

collision and interpenetration of ancient, Islamic and Turkic nomadic cultural traditions. The main and most numerous contingent of the military-political class of the Sultanate of Mamluk - were the Kipchak Turks and Caucasians, famous for their military craft (16. 115-116). It is “here and now” that the first direct contact of representatives of the Caucasian ethnic groups with the already rather “romanized” Maghreb culture of the Western Islamic world takes place.

The gradual integration of Caucasian ethnic groups into the local socio-cultural environment could not happen without the mastering of local cultural traditions, among which were the basic principles of geometric design in the craft of architectural mosaics, textiles and carpet. This factor undoubtedly deserves attention when analyzing the nature and methods of the “migration” of the so-called “Lezghi design” to the Caucasian Shirvan.

A convincing argument in favor of the migration of this design from the Maghreb - through Anatolia - to the Caucasus, is the fact of the subsequent Ottoman conquest of the Maghreb by Sultan Selim Yavuz (1517). The entire Maghreb was ruled by the Ottomans and was forced to pay tribute to Ottoman Porte by craftsmen, expensive textiles and carpets.

The design of “Bandy-Rumi”, which acquired its final formation in the Ottoman environment, quickly spread in the decor of palace interiors, textiles and carpets. The geometric design of “Bandy-Rumi”, along with the floral (paradise) design, which came from the Safavid environment, is becoming one of the most sought-after at this time.

Finally, an equally important way of spreading and migrating the geometric design and motif of the Lezghi Star carpet in Anatolia and the Caucasus, which was part of the Safavid Empire, was transcontinental trade along the Great Silk Road.

It was at this time that carpets with a characteristic Roman-Maghreb geometric design and the famous cruciform star are delivered by Venetian merchants to Europe and enter the paintings of artists.



Oghuz nomads factor ...

For 15-18 centuries, nomadic Oghuz tribes actively participate in the formation of large super-ethnoses and political associations in the territory of Anatolia, Iran, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Having mastered this purely urban geometric design, nomads contribute to its further canonization and “cementing” in the carpet traditions of their closed communities.

The nomadic past of the Shirvan villages of Jamjamli and Zeyva suggests exactly this way of forming sustainable carpet traditions and the famous Lezgi Star design in the Caucasian environment. There is no doubt that the extremely geometrized and mathematically perfect design of this carpet could not be born in a pastoral nomadic environment. Nomads adopted this urban “palace” design and kept its simplified version in their carpets.

Caucasian, Shirvan carpets of former nomads, with the so-called “Lezghi Star” design, are the final product and point in the long history of the rise, flourishing and preservation of this motif in local carpet traditions.



The term "Lezghi Star" and its problems ...

Neighboring Turkic ethnic groups of the Caucasus named “Lezghi” called the mountain inhabitants who do not speak Turkic language. It was a conventional and collective name. In reality, in the South-Eastern Caucasus there are about 30 mountain peoples, and only one of them has the word Lezghi in the self-name. And the word “star” in the Lezgin language is pronounced “*Q’yed*”.

None of the sources recorded the definition of a cross-shaped eight-pointed star of the Caucasian carpet in the form - “Lezghi Q’yed”. There is only his invented English version - “Lezghi star”. It is unlikely that the design and motif designated as - Lezghin, would not have its authentic, local name. However, he has an English name !!! Obviously, this is an artificially created, replicated, commercial name of the same Shirvan carpet.

A real disappointment for fans of the English name “Lezghi Star” should be the fact that the population of the village of Zeyva was never Lezghin! Zeyva is traditionally a Tat village and its weavers would hardly have called their carpet “Lezghi Star”.

CONCLUSION

1. Occurrence of the “Lezgi Star” design and motif dates back to ancient Greek-Roman mosaics preserved in the interiors and floors of rich antique villas. The earliest designs and motifs of the so-called “Lezgi Star” were found in the monuments of ancient Greek and, later, Roman civilization.

The technology of creating a mosaic decor on the basis of the geometric design could not be better, suitable for use in textile and carpet technology. In both antique mosaics and carpets, step-by-step (“tiled”) building leads to the formation of a complete motif, mirror-repeating in a geometric design. Carpet weaver performs the same technological method, but not with ceramic tiles, but with carpet nodes. Strictly geometric construction of the elements of motive - contributes to the overall geometrization and systematization of the design of the carpet. A similar technology of complementarity in the art of mosaic and carpet weaving predetermined the similarity of the general principles of shaping, geometry and motifs in the form of regular geometric shapes.

2. Based on the history of the origin of the design and the motif “Lezghi Star”, it would be more correct and historically reasonable to call it - “The Roman Star”.

The “Lezghi Star” motif and the Roman mosaic star do not just have an external similarity. Identical and their design context. This total identity eliminates the possibility of accidental similarity.

At this time, the Greek heritage of the geometric design of the mosaic decor of ancient palaces, has already been buried underground.

The contact of the Islamic civilization with the Roman heritage leads to the assimilation of this design and motive. The renewed “Roman design” appears in the Muslim palace mosaic panels, textiles and carpets under a new name - “Bandy-Rumi” (Roman grid, bundle).

During the period of the Cordoba and Abbasid Caliphates, the Seljuk and Mamluk Sultanate, the strict design of Roman mosaics acquired more color, brightness and decorative sophistication typical of the Muslim palace culture.

The “Roman Star” motif in the Caucasian carpet is just one “replica” of this design. The whole artistic potential of Eastern geometric carpets, contains a huge number of design designs and motifs of Greco-Roman civilization. Many of these carpets are not preserved. But they are preserved in the paintings of artists of the European Renaissance and are conventionally designated as the carpet "Memling", "Bellini", "Lotto", "Holbein", "Ghirlandaio.

3. The name "Lezghi Star" ("Lezghi Design") first appeared in carpet terminology at the end of the 20th century. The history of the design and motive of this carpet is much older than the appearance of this name.

The name "Lezghi Star" does not take into account the cultural and historical environment of origin, the artistic and technical features of the design and its migration. The emergence of this name is most likely dictated by the desire to give the basic motif and design of the carpet - ethnic classification.

As the analysis of the marketing of Caucasian carpets shows, the name "Lezghi Star" is used by dealers for commercial purposes. And the goal is the same: to sell an old, “stale” product with a new, intriguing “brand”. Unfortunately, this “ingenious” marketing can be found even at serious dealer companies (“Claremont Rug Company”).

Authentic carpets of the late 19th century with this design, depending on the preservation, artistic value, size, materials and dyes, are estimated by experts from 2.500 to 6.500 US dollars.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



PILE CARPET. SHIRVAN. CAUCASUS. ("LEZGHI STAR")
LATE XIXth CENTURY. AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL CARPET MUSEUM



Ancient Mosaic Floor Design Stoa Attalos Agora.
6th Century BC Greece



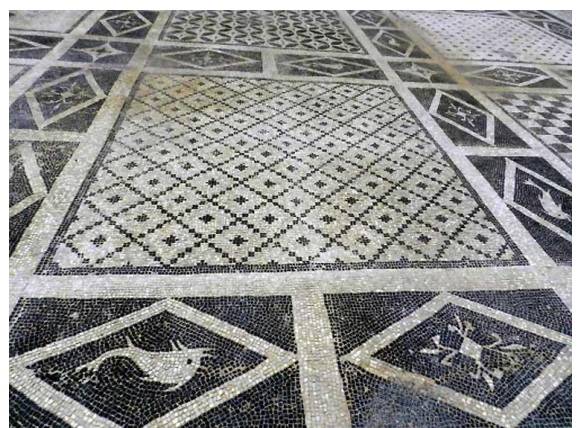
Ancient mosaic on the floor as the art of ancient
Greek civilization



Ancient Poseidon mosaic found in Turkey's Adana. 4th century B.C.



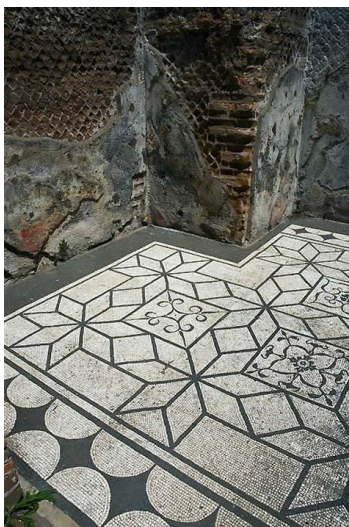
Detail of a pebble mosaic floor in the House
of Dionysos, 4th century BC. Pella. Greece



Ancient Greece. Mosaics at Isthmia, near
Corinth. Greece



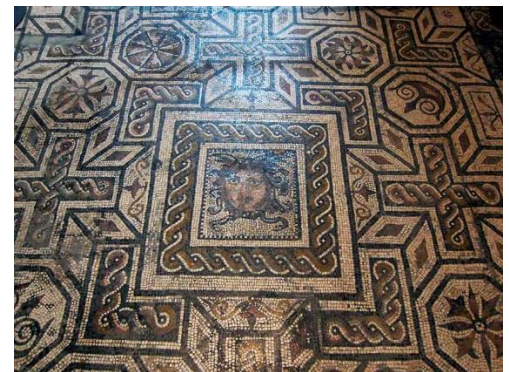
Roman Empire



Detail of the mosaic floor in Hadrian's Villa. Tivoli. Italy. IIth century AD



II th century AD. House of Dionysos at Kato Paphos, Cyprus. Mosaic floor



Palacio de la Condesa de Lebrija Roman mosaic. Sevilla, Spain.



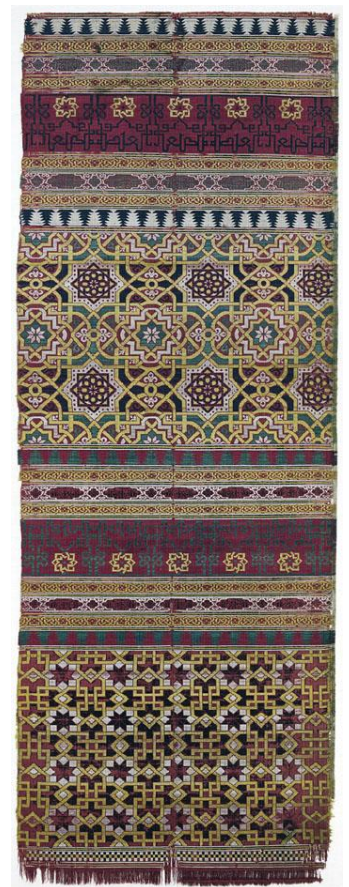
Emirato de Córdoba



Alhambra silk. Nasrid, Granada.
ca. 1400. Museo del Prado



CURTAIN PANEL.
17TH-18TH CENTURY



Textile. Nasrid Period



Fragment from a Large Curtain,
1300s Spain, Granada, Islamic
Nasrid period, 14th century lampas



Textile Fragment. Date. 14th-15th century. Attributed to Spain
or North Africa



SPANISH TEXTILES.15TH CENTURY
Polygonal star pattern. Brocade silk damask
(late 15th) from Spain



Fragments of a Panel. 15th century. (detail)



Spanish Brocade. 14th c. Muslim Nasrid dynasty



Early XXth century. Antique spanish rug



Spain, Granada, Nasrid period. 1300s. Lampas and taqueté



Moroccan Carpet. Late 19th century



Mudejar Wheel carpet
12th century. Spanish- Moroccan



Beni Ourain. Moroccan Rug



EARLY ISLAMIC TEXTILE FRAGMENT.
Egypt, c. 8th-12th century AD. The fabric with geometric designs



Mamluk. Damascus. Museum Islamic Art Berlin



Egypt. Mamluk period(1250-1516) Ashmolean.
Victoria and Albert Museum



Egypt, 14th-16th century. V&A Museum



Egypt. Mamluk textile. Asmolean museum



Anatolia



Afgan. Taimani carpet



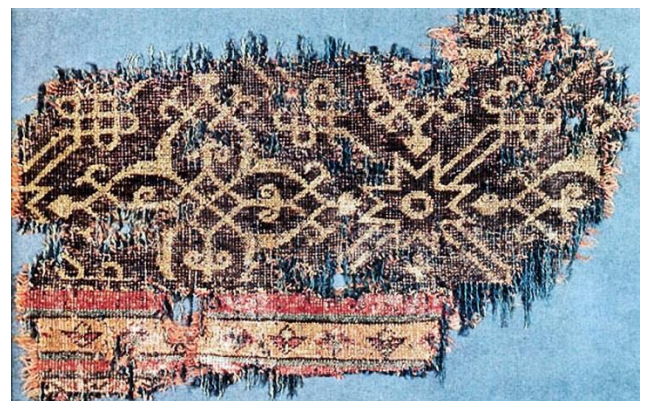
Shahsevan Salt-Bag from the Moghan region of Azerbaijan. 19th Century



Banjara Textile-Antique Turkoman



Shasevan. Moshe Tabibnia. Collezione .



Timurid. fragment. 15th century. Benaki Museum, Athen



Caucasian. Shirvan. Late XIX – early XXth century